

Action Research Project- Developing Collective Efficacy

Action Research:

Now into our fifth year of inquiry our teams have moved through cycles each time adding to their knowledge of data use, collection, understanding and implementation. Through our inquiry work we have revised the ways we use, create and adjust data to identify student outcomes. In addition teams have developed goals and integrated protocols in their work. As we reviewed our data the core inquiry team began to notice that the problem of practice shifted from skill and strategy work to a greater problem of implementation. Instruction (especially when working with struggling students) shifted to a teacher-dominated lesson resulting in the inability of students to self-monitoring their learning. Staff members had difficulty identifying what big umbrella ideas resulted in the success of their students. Our core team identified two protocols to use to assist teacher in the identification of this process. The protocols allowed teachers to identify the key elements necessary for student success, which is measured by student growth.

Problem of Practice:

In an effort to assist students, teachers have shifted their teaching style to teaching a step-by-step model of instruction leaving little to no room for self-monitoring. Teachers have created an environment where students are often walked through each step of the work. This approach is hindering students from becoming independent learners and thinkers. As a result, students are not taking ownership of learning, causing difficulty with self-monitoring.

State the Rationale for the Problem of Practice:

In an effort to support student achievement teachers are delivering instruction using a step-by-step approach, limiting students ability to reflect on their own learning. As a result, students are relying on teacher feedback rather than through their own experiences with the work. Students are not taught the importance of self monitoring and engaging in questioning to develop deeper understanding of content.

Provide an Overview of a Plan of Action:

As we review the current cycle of inquiry work and data collection our core team has struggles to identify what is holding back students from making the big jumps needed to show significant progress. The team came up with the plan to conduct data conferences with teachers using the success protocol and collaborative assessment protocol. Teachers arrive prepared at the meeting to present the case study of a “success” student and a “challenge” student. Teachers must provide student work across curricular areas. Teachers and instructional cabinet use the protocols to look at student work to share best practices for their successful students and elicit next steps for their challenges.

1. Organize for Collaboration

Organizing for collaboration required a great deal of school wide planning. As we entered our third year of Inquiry Work I wanted to move the core team as well as grade level teams forward taking into account previous evidence and findings. To ensure time would be allotted for this Data Wise Improvement Step, I requested a school based option vote, which would ensure time for collaboration among all staff members. This

planning included, the creation of vertical teacher teams, which provided opportunity for looking at trends across grades. A school wide professional text was studied by all entitled, *The Power of Protocols*, which provided an assortment of protocols to help structure the way teams looked at student work. Inquiry monthly schedules were posted to guide teachers in their weekly meetings and support the structure their cycles. Teachers were required to post agendas and team notes on ARIS as well as maintain a binder reflecting student work and resources. Each team has established roles such as Inquiry Facilitator, Data Specialist and Grade Facilitator. This helped to build capacity by organizing the responsibility of all members of the team.

2. Build Assessment Literacy

Identifying specific benchmark periods, creating forms for collecting data in a uniformed and systematic manner, developing clear benchmark dates for short and long-term review and assessment (ie. running records, periodic assessments, performance tasks)

and setting norms were a focus for building assessment literacy. Developing ways to read this data that is consistent throughout the school and interpreting norms were emphasized. Both formative and summative assessments were utilized during this part of the process. As our basis for building assessment literacy, our Math Coach and literacy Staff Developer provided professional development in reviewing data. With this focus, an understanding of the validity and purpose for assessment was addressed. Sharing benchmarks across grades is valid for all teachers. Consistency, trends and interpretation of data were emphasized.

3. Create Data Overview

To create a data overview our data specialist gathered data from multiple sources such as, Acuity, Predictive, Assessment Pro and created a spread sheet that tells the story of each class. This information is documented in a clear and concise way by using a student work protocol. The Data specialist shares spreadsheets and graph during professional development opportunities. In addition, district wide data is shared as a reference point.

A Data wall illustrating students above the benchmark, students identified as meeting the benchmark and students identified as falling below the benchmark are displayed in the Principals office. This information is referenced during cabinet meetings as well as curricula meetings. In addition, the data from the wall has been shared with all teachers. Acuity, ARIS, NY state exam, benchmark assessments, assessment pro data collected are triangulated to tell a story. Throughout this step teams made decisions regarding what additional information they need to assess the problems of practice.

4. Dig Into Student Data

During Inquiry time, which is two times a week for 37.5 minute blocks, and during common preparation periods teachers have time to analyze student work using the Tuning Protocol. As the year progressed teachers can select a variation of this protocol or another that they feel will better serve their focus. The use of multiple sources of data help to define the focus of the Inquiry Cycle. By looking at data the team creates a plan for the lowest 1/3 students and then deepens their data analyses by using multiple sources of data to solidify their findings about the skills and strategies needed for

student improvement. In addition, teachers collect summative and formative data through for each identified student throughout the implementation cycle. This allows teachers to make instructional shift if necessary to support student progress.

5. Examine Instruction

At this step the teachers identified their problem of practice as requiring more skill based cycles of instruction. This became one the most challenging steps for teacher teams because they continued to reevaluate instruction, assess instruction and modify instruction. However, the core team realized that the true problem of practice was not the implementation of instruction but the development of student independence and self-monitoring. Since students were not provided with opportunities to self-monitor and build upon their own ideas without teacher support or guidance they had difficulty progressing. Several of these students were identified as “stalls”. This unexpected shift was brought to the attention of the Core Team by the review of team agendas, classroom observation, data analysis, curriculum map reviews and visiting team discussions.

6. Develop Action Plan

This step highlights the framework for the core teams action plan. The Core inquiry team scheduled data meetings one on one where teachers were required to present a student who they considered to be successful as well as a student who is challenging. In order to maintain the integrity of our findings we presented two protocols; The Success

Protocol and The Collaborative Protocol to analyze student work and identify the reoccurring themes that identify the successful students.

7. Plan to Assess Progress

This information was shared with our faculty during our monthly faculty conference. Teachers used a Survey Monkey to analyze teacher data and to confirm our findings. The Inquiry Core Team determined there is a need for teachers to revisit Steps 5 and 6 using the findings from the Data Meetings. They are Analyzing which steps they have been successful at implementing and where in the process they are to ensure next steps that go beyond skills and strategies but move toward a specific problem of practice. After discussion and analyses of student work, the team must be clear about their focus of inquiry and identify what strategies they will focus on in our school wide problem of practice of developing metacognition and independence across our school.

8. Act and Assess

During data meeting teachers named success as students becoming empowered to take ownership of their learning. As a result of information shared with teachers during our faculty conference, steps were developed to act upon these noticings and implement instructional change that focuses on metacognition and independence. At this time our core team is eager to revisit the Data Wise Improvement process steps to identify and continue our assessment of teaching practice to develop specific areas of improvement.

REFLECTION

Thorough out the inquiry process we found it empowering to have teachers work together with the goal of impacting student instruction. Although we are faced with many challenges such as time and resources it is through our school based option that we were able to utilize the allocated time to implement this important work. As a school leader I am a firm believer in engaging all members of the school community in analyzing professional literature. Setting up norms and protocols allowed for all participants to have proprietorship of their work. By implementing the Data Wise improvement process we were able to adjust our initial finding by reflecting upon how we were examining instruction. The real problem of practice was in the development of metacognition and ability for students to self- monitor their work. By allowing children to take ownership over the work they so they are able to problem solve ways of figuring out what is needed for students to be successful. This shift in our thinking allows our inquiry teams to refocus our work. Going forward data will be collected to support the revised problem of practice. Teachers must be able to plan lessons where students are asked to think of the outcome, and use resources such as rubrics and tasks to drive their thinking.